

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD
For the Montana National Register of Historic Places Program and State Antiquities Database

Montana State Historic Preservation Office
Montana Historical Society
PO Box 201202, 1410 8th Ave
Helena, MT 59620-1202

Property Address: **MSU Campus**

Historic Address (if applicable): **None**

City/Town: **Bozeman**

Site Number: **24 GA 1796**

(An historic district number may also apply.)

County: **Gallatin**

Historic Name: **Danforth Chapel**

Original Owner(s): **Montana State College, Bozeman**

Current Ownership ☐ Private ☒ Public

Current Property Name: **Danforth Chapel**

Owner(s): **Montana State University, Bozeman**

Owner Address: **Administration & Finance
PO Box 172440
Bozeman, MT 59717**

Phone:

Legal Location

PM: **Montana** Township: **2S** Range: **5E**

SE ¼ NW ¼ NE ¼ of Section: **13**

Lot(s): **NA**

Block(s): **D**

Addition: **Northern Pacific Addn.** Year of Addition:
rev. 1959

USGS Quad Name: **Bozeman** Year: **1995**

Historic Use: **Chapel**

Current Use: **Chapel**

Construction Date: **1950-52** ☐ Estimated ☒ Actual

☒ Original Location ☐ Moved Date Moved:

UTM Reference www.nris.mt.gov/topofinder2

☐ NAD 27 ☒ NAD 83 (preferred)

Zone: **12** Easting: **496313** Northing: **5057149**

National Register of Historic Places

NRHP Listing Date:

Historic District:

NRHP Eligible: ☒ Yes ☐ No

Date of this document: **March 11, 2010**

Form Prepared by: **Diana J. Painter, PhD**

Address: **3518 N. C Street, Spokane, WA 99205**

Daytime Phone: **(707) 364-0697**

MT SHPO USE ONLY

Eligible for NRHP: ☒ yes ☐ no

Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Date: 11/17/2010

Evaluator: Kate Hampton

Comments:

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD

PAGE 2

Property Name: **Danforth Chapel**

Site Number: **24 GA 1796**

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

X See Additional Information Page

Architectural Style: **Modern** If Other, specify:
Property Type: **Religious** Specific Property Type: **Chapel**

Architect: **Emanuel Milstein** Architectural Firm/City/State: **None**
Builder/Contractor: **Students, MSU** Company/City/State: **Bozeman, MT**
Source of Information: **MSU Archives**

Location and setting. The Danforth Chapel is located on the grounds of the Montana State University at Bozeman. It is an inter-denominational chapel located within a small grove of evergreen trees adjacent to Danforth Park (formerly The Iris Garden) in the northeast quadrant of the campus. It is a small, one-story building with an L-shaped footprint and a shallow pitched shed roof. It has a deep, enclosed overhang and a tall fascia on the front façade, no eaves on the side facades, and narrow eaves on the back. It is located between Wilson Hall, Danforth Park and the 1926 Herrick Hall, and Hannon Residence Hall. A large parking lot is located south of the building. South 7th Avenue is located east of the building. The building is oriented toward the east, facing Hannon Hall. It is a Modern building, designed by Emanuel Milstein, and constructed 1950-52.

Materials and construction. The building is wood-frame construction with a pressed wood, clapboard finish, a concrete slab foundation, and a built-up roof. A stone masonry wall is incorporated as part of the building, but primarily projects into the landscape and provides a privacy screen between the main entry to the building and the chapel. Additional materials include stained glass. Windows have wood frames, and doors are flush wood.

Design and massing. The Danforth Chapel has a simple form. The rear "L" of the building reads as an auxiliary space and the nearly flat roof contributes to the perception of the building as a cubic form. Its modernity is evident in the wall of windows on the east, front façade that bring the outdoors in, and in the projecting stone masonry wall that contributes spatial complexity to this relationship.

East façade. The east façade of the building has two parts, divided by the stone masonry wall. The entries to the building are on the south side of this façade, separated by the stone wall. They are composed of two flush wood doors, each paired with a window of full-height glass. Three transom windows surmount these ensembles. This masonry wall is about 7'-0" in height and projects from the face of the building about 45'-0". The deep overhang in this area has enclosed eaves and is finished with a tall fascia topped by a narrow metal coping. Its width and depth further defines the entry areas. The north side of the front façade opens onto the chapel area. It is composed of a window wall of full-height glass with widely-spaced wood mullions. The windows extend from the concrete sill of the chapel at the ground to the underside of the soffit. The overhang here is narrow, and is met by the north wall to provide shelter and screening.

South façade. The south, side façade of the building has one opening on the west side. This is a modern, full-height, stained glass window within a recessed area that is enclosed on the left with an extension of the rear wall and above with an extension of the eaves. The stone masonry wall is visible from the south side of the building.

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD

PAGE 3

Property Name: **Danforth Chapel**

Site Number: **24 GA 1796**

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

West façade. The west façade has a small “L” on the north side. This façade has narrow boxed eaves with the same tall fascia and metal coping seen throughout the building. A small opening with louvers is seen on the face of the main building in this location. The small wing has a flush door on the south façade and a narrow, horizontally-oriented, wood-frame window on the east face. This is asymmetrically placed toward the left side of this face and has fixed and casement lights.

North façade. The north façade has no openings. The only feature on this face is the narrow eave visible on the west side.

Site and landscaping. The Danforth Chapel is set within a grove of evergreens and other mature trees. It is unfortunately sited close to a large parking lot and adjacent row of parking stalls with a “no parking sign” for every stall. This and other features of the parking lot are incompatible with the nature of the chapel. To the north is Danforth Park, originally known as The Iris Garden. This 1930 garden is in the process of being restored.

Changes over time. The only change evident on the chapel is the replacement of original siding with pressed wood siding. This has not been confirmed and no date is known for this change, although this is a relatively new building material.

Architectural Context

The Danforth Chapel is a small, relatively simple building that shares features with modern residential and small scale commercial structures of the period. The following describes features of the building and its siting that affiliate it other small-scale, modern structures.

- The building is free-standing, meant to be viewed within its landscaped setting, which is composed of both formal (in the case of The Iris Garden) and informal plantings and landscape elements (the parking lot to the south is a visual intrusion).
- It is also meant to be viewed from within as part of the landscape, evidenced by the wall of windows on the front, east façade and the masonry wall, which isolates the building from within from views of the parking area to the south.
- The wall also contributes privacy to the chapel area.
- The masonry wall also demarcates the entry, which would otherwise read as part of the front window wall.
- The cubic form of the building, while simple at first glance, is ‘broken up’ by the stone masonry wall, contributing a spatial complexity to the building and site.
- It is composed of natural materials (the pressed wood cladding is relatively new), with natural finishes, including wood and stone.
- The sole decorative feature of the building, the stained glass window, is modern in design.

The building is modern in its form, design elements, materials and finishes, and siting and landscaping.

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD

PAGE 4

Property Name: **Danforth Chapel**

Site Number: **24 GA 1796**

HISTORY OF PROPERTY

☒ See Additional Information Page

The Danforth Chapel is described as follows in the University's guide to the campus grounds and buildings:

This non-denominational chapel was built in 1950-52 with the help of the Danforth Foundation and is used for weddings, memorial services and religious events. It houses the keyboard from which the University carillon may be played. The carillon, a gift of Joseph Mares, class of 1924, plays every morning and evening and on special occasions such as commencement and presidential inaugurations. Stained glass windows in the chapel are a memorial to the men and women who died in World War II ("Danforth Chapel," Montana State University Campus Map).

The chapel was designed by Emanuel Milstein, an architecture graduate from Montana State University. It was built by about twenty Montana State College students beginning in 1950, using funds from a \$7,000 grant from the Danforth Foundation. The college made up the remaining estimated funds of \$13,000 through donations from faculty and students. It took two years to build the chapel. It was dedicated in June 1952.

Milstein received his BA in architecture in 1951. In 1958, after working for several years in naval architecture, he and a partner developed a method of preparing concrete formwork from laminated fiberglass to use for large-scale, cast-in-place concrete construction (*Riddle, 2008*).

INFORMATION SOURCES/BIBLIOGRAPHY

Page

☐ See Additional Information

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"Project Iris Garden, Students for Danforth Park," <http://projectirisgarden.com/>, downloaded February 1, 2010.

Riddle, Mason, "Emanuel Milstein: Architect as Sculptor," *Fabric Architecture*, March 2008. http://fabricarchitecturemag.com/articles/0308_sk_milstein.html, downloaded February 1, 2010.

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"William H. Danforth, Founder," *Purina*, www.purina.com, downloaded February 1, 2010.

"Working on Chapel," *The Independent Record*, October 11, 1950, p. 2.

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD

PAGE 5

Property Name: **Danforth Chapel**

Site Number: **24 GA 1796**

HISTORY OF PROPERTY

His work in concrete subsequently led to a Fulbright Travel Award to study in France. Milstein is a registered architect and professional planner in New Jersey, but has focused much of his career on sculpture, specifically sculpture for synagogues. He is still in practice in Marlboro, New Jersey. The Danforth Chapel at MSU is mentioned in an article on Milstein's work in the New York Times in 2000 (*Kuehn, 2000*). In the article he credits his work on the chapel with the beginning of his career in religious architecture and sculpture.

The Danforth Foundation

The Danforth Foundation was founded by William H. Danforth, who gained his fortune by developing the Ralston Purina Company, the largest producer of pet food in the United States and Canada (www.purina.com). He began his business in 1894, mixing formula feeds for farm animals, long before there was a commercial feed industry. In addition to his interest in nutrition, he was very involved in Christian education for children. He, along with a group of friends, organized the American Youth Foundation in 1924. When president of the Foundation he established the 300-acre Camp Miniwanca, a Christian camp for children in Michigan.

The Danforth Foundation was established by Danforth and his wife in 1927 to provide scholarships and fellowships to college students and teachers. His foundation, which is based in St. Louis, has also helped build 24 chapels on college campuses and in hospitals throughout the United States. They are either non-denominational or meditation chapels, and are designed in a variety of architectural styles. One of the most architecturally progressive chapels was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, built in 1955 at Florida State College.

The Danforth Chapel

The Danforth Chapel remains a center of social and religious activities on the campus, in addition to providing a rental facility for weddings and other events. It was the subject of a 47-page publication by Merrill G. Burlingame, Montana State University's historian, and others in the 1990s, entitled "The Danforth Chapel and religious activities at Montana State University, 1893-1991." A related publication has been prepared by students Alata Howells, Raquel Peterson and Mike Gleason entitled "The MSU Iris Gardens Will Rise Again! Danforth Park Revisited 1929-2009."

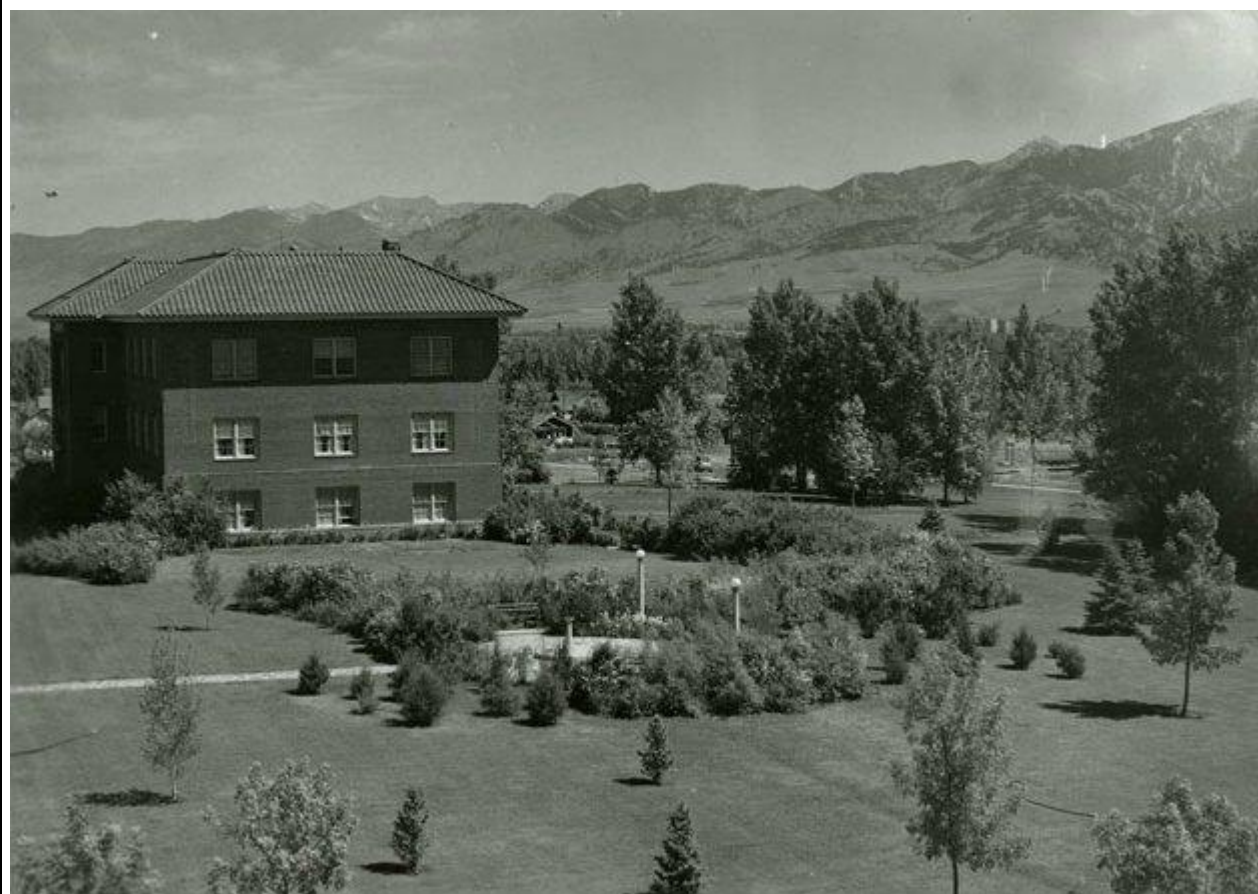
Danforth Park, formerly called The Iris Garden, is located directly north of the Chapel. It is currently undergoing restoration by a group of students and their advisors. The park was sponsored in 1930 by the American Women's Society, a campus group, and was located south of Herrick Hall, the social center for the campus at that time. Similar to Danforth Chapel, the initiative and funding came in part from the students. The name was changed to Danforth Park in the 1970s.

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD

PAGE 6

Property Name: **Danforth Chapel**

Site Number: **24 GA 1796**



Historic photograph of 1930 Iris Garden (Danforth Park) (n.d.), *Courtesy Montana State University*

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD

PAGE 7

Property Name: **Danforth Chapel**

Site Number: **24 GA 1796**

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

NRHP Listing Date:

NRHP Eligibility: X Yes ☐ No X Individually X Contributing to Historic District ☐ Noncontributing to Historic District

NRHP Criteria: X A ☐ B X C ☐ D

Area of Significance: **EDUCATION/ARCHITECTURE** Period of Significance:

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

☐ See Additional Information Page

The Danforth Chapel is significant under Criterion A, as one in a series of 24 chapels built throughout the United States by the Danforth Foundation, which was founded by William H. Danforth. Danforth began the Ralston Purina Company and was a forerunner in developing the commercial feed industry.

The Chapel is also significant under Criterion A as part of the history of the Montana State University at Bozeman campus. The funding, design and construction of the chapel was initiated and primarily undertaken by students on the campus. As such, it represents an unusual and significant contribution to the history of the campus. The historic Iris Garden, also a student-based initiative, is now called Danforth Park and forms a landscaped counterpart to this building.

The Chapel is also significant under Criterion C for its architectural design. It embodies the distinctive elements of a small, modern structure, representing the ideal of a "jewel in the landscape." It was designed by Emanuel Milstein, who went on to a career specializing in the design of sculpture for synagogues. Milstein is still alive and practicing in New Jersey. While it is not customary to evaluate the contribution of an architect in his lifetime, Milstein's career and relationship to this building should be evaluated in the future, in the context of his body of work and contribution to sacred architecture.

INTEGRITY

☐ See Additional Information Page

The building retains integrity of location, workmanship, feeling and association. It has been slightly altered with the addition of pressed wood siding, in place of the original siding on the building (this needs to be confirmed). The setting is altered by the addition of a parking lot and more importantly, extensive parking lot signage on the south side. The building retains sufficient integrity, however, to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD
PHOTOGRAPHS

Property Name: **Danforth Chapel**

Site Number: **24 GA 1796**



Description: **East façade, viewed from southeast**



Description: **East façade, viewed from northeast**

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD
PHOTOGRAPHS

Property Name: **Danforth Chapel**

Site Number: **24 GA 1796**



Description: **South facade**



Description: **West façade, viewed from southwest**

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD
PHOTOGRAPHS

Property Name: **Danforth Chapel**

Site Number: **24 GA 1796**



Description: **West façade, north wing**



Description: **North façade**

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD
PHOTOGRAPHS

Property Name: **Danforth Chapel**

Site Number: **24 GA 1796**



Description: **Detail**

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD
SITE MAP

Property Name: **Danforth Chapel**

Site Number: **24 GA 1796**



MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD
TOPOGRAPHIC MAP

Property Name: **Danforth Chapel**

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